

REMARKS

Claims 1-13 are in the application. Independent claim 1 is amended to avoid the art of record. No new matter is added. Claims 14-17 were previously cancelled.

Drawings

The drawings were objected to under 37 CFR 1.83 (a). The office action indicated that the drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. The office action further indicated that the contact first and second ends must be shown or the features canceled from the claims. No new matter should be entered.

To avoid the objection, claim 1 has been amended to delete reference to “contact first and second ends.” No new matter has been added. Thus, Applicants believe that the objection has been avoided.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 103

The office action rejected claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ericson et al. (Ericson) in view of Mahnke et al. (Mahnke). In view of the amendment to claim 1 above and the following comments, Applicants respectfully assert that amended claim 1 avoids the prior art of record.

Extension cords are used, both indoors and outdoors, to connect a load such as an appliance to a live source of electrical power. When the extension cord is used to connect the load to a live source of electrical power, a user will normally connect the receptacle end of the extension cord to the load and then insert the plug of the extension cord into a live receptacle for a source of power. But, at this time, if the load remains de-energized after the plug is inserted into the receptacle, the user can only guess where the problem lies. For example, is the receptacle not connected to a live source of electrical power; is a conductor of the extension cord not continuous; is the load defective, etc.

Our invention is directed to helping solve this problem by providing, in one embodiment, an indicator (LED) in a plug that indicates whether or not the phase and

neutral prongs (contacts) of the plug are connected to a live source of electrical power. In another embodiment, the indicator can be in a female connector (receptacle) as part of an extension cord providing an indication that the phase and neutral prongs of the plug and the cord are connected to a live source of electrical power. In both cases, the indicator (LED) glows when the connector is properly connected to a power source regardless of the connection to a ground contact.

Our invention does not indicate that the load is properly grounded nor do we use or claim a ground fault detector as is disclosed in Ericson. Our invention is not directed toward, nor are we even concerned with whether the ground line of the extension cord is connected and whether the neutral or hot and ground lines have been interchanged as disclosed in Mahnke. Rather, Our invention is directed to indicating whether or not the phase and neutral contacts of a connector which slidably engage corresponding phase and neutral contacts in a mating connector are connected to a live source of electrical power regardless of the connection of the ground contact to the mating connector. Thus, in our invention, we provide a series circuit from the top of one prong through an LED and a resistor (diode) to the top of a second prong of a plug to indicate if the lower ends of the prongs of the plug are connected to a live source of electrical power. With our invention, the LED will glow when the phase and neutral prongs of the plug are connected to a live source of electrical power and regardless of whether the ground contact is properly connected to the mating connector. Clearly, neither the Ericson nor the Mahnke reference, either separately or combined, disclose doing what we now disclose and claim as our invention. Our invention indicates (LED will be off and not glow) that a fault exists if the phase and neutral prongs of the plug are not connected to a live source of electrical power. On the other hand, the LED in our invention glows if the phase and neutral prongs of the plug are connected to a live source of electrical power. In contrast, the cited references indicate a fault (LED glows) when a ground fault is detected or if the ground line has been reversed. In other words, the cited references indicate a fault condition by making an LED glow whereas in our invention a fault condition is indicated

by not having the LED glow. Thus, the indicator in our invention operates opposite to that of the cited references.

Our amended claim 1 avoids the Ericson reference in view of the Mahnke reference by reciting the structure of “a first contact adapted to slidably engage a phase contact of a mating connector; a second contact adapted to slidably engage a neutral contact of the mating connector; a third contact adapted to slidably engage a ground contact of the mating connector” in combination with “a series circuit having light emitting means having an on state and an off state ... electrically coupled to said first and second contacts for indicating if said first and second contacts are connected to a live source of electrical power when engaging said mating connector by being in its on state, regardless of the connection of the third contact to the mating connector.”

Claims 2-13 depend from claim 1 and, therefore, also avoid the cited references.

Claims 1-13 now clearly avoid the cited references and, therefore, it is our understanding that claims 1-13 now present in the application are in condition for allowance. Early and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required for the amendment, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 12-1185.

In the event that an extension of time is required to make this amendment timely filed, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this amendment timely and is hereby authorized to charge any fee for

such an extension of time or credit an overpayment for an extension of time to
Deposit Account No. 12-1185.

Respectfully submitted,



Date: September 26, 2005

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